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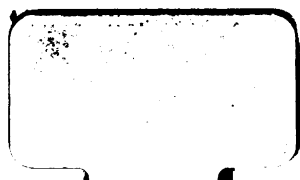
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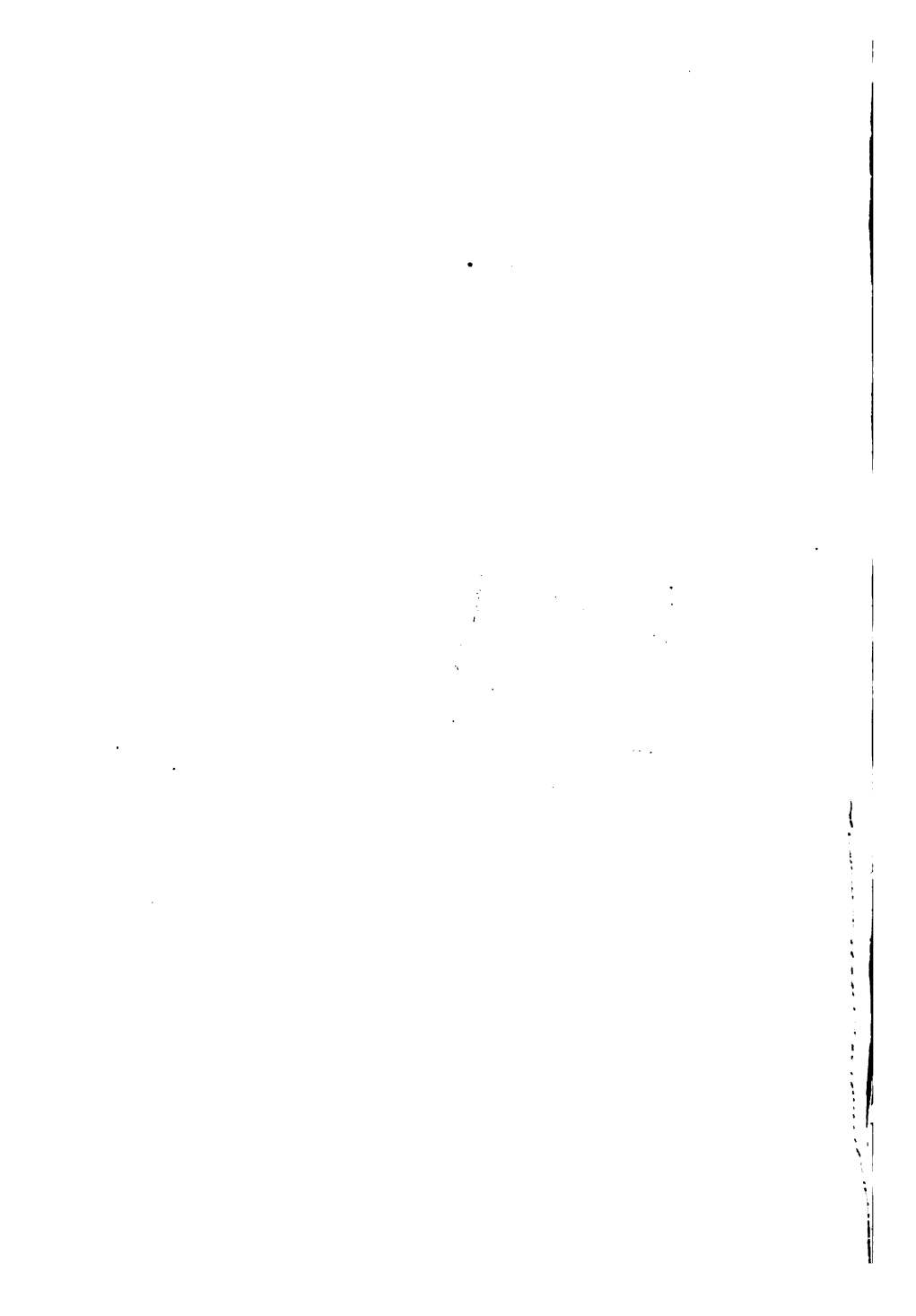


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AN HISTORIC FANTASY OF VENICE

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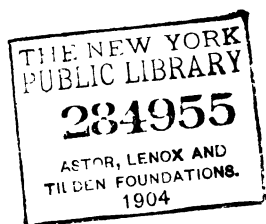


FERD. ONGANIA EDIT.

M. DCCCC.

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TO MY BELOVED GRANDMOTHER

MARGARET ANN BURNETT

I DEDICATE

THIS MY MODEST FIRST WORK

INSPIRED BY THE SILENT LAGOONS

*« Inclita Regina vergene poncella
Del Mondo specchio sei Venetia bella ».*

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THE ORIENT





The Orient



Whatever the political meaning of the sailing of the Hohenzollern and whether or not the young Emperor of Germany is to be the Templar of a New Jerusalem, the entry and the departure at Venice, -- in that city of all others most rich in memories of romantic splendors - seemed to signal an historic moment, strangely picturesque in the cold light of nineteenth century history.

On the twelfth of October, 1898, the Mayor of Venice published this Manifesto :

Cittadini;

Their Majesties the King and Queen arrive among us to-morrow to meet their Imperial Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Germany, who have chosen Venice whence to weigh anchor for the Orient, — (*« per salpare alla volta d'Oriente »*).

To the August guests, homage and good wishes, to our sovereigns, renewed feelings of unalterable devotion and affection.

Venezia, 12 Ottobre 1898.

Il Sindaco:

F. GRIMANI.

In the *Bacino di San Marco*, the great white yacht with her armored cruisers lay waiting the coming of the latest Crusader, and down the water way of sea palaces swept the splendor of the crimson and gold stuffs and the glittering sailless *antennae* of the Venetian *biszone*. Between the swift pressing lines of Mediaeval rowers; in the very centre of this graceful swaying Venetian motion, sitting in the royal gondola by the side of the King of Italy is the Northern Emperor, the modern *biondo imperator della foresta!*

And Venice with the fatal gift of beauty hers still, in spite of all the jewels she has lost, in spite of kingdoms, provinces and

towns slipped from her hold, Venice even in the marble shroud of her sea-changed palaces thrilled at this old-time honor that is hers again.

Who more right than she to stretch toward Jerusalem, to serve as the last link between Europe and that Orient which had once been her wealth!

At the corner of St. Marks that looks toward the lagoon their are three most precious pilasters with heavy Sirian capitals and mysterious Coptic writings, that have been so deciphered:

A Dio Esauditore Sommo;
A Dio Supremo e Massimo;
A Dio Avvocato e Salvatore:

And this sacred part of Venice's Eastern treasure, only another sign of her conquests, a measure of her one time dominion, came to her through Baldovino I, King of Jerusalem who was crowned in Bethlehem, the same whose daughter Sibilla, married to a Cyprian King brought with her, her Syrian dower of *Jaffa* and *Ascalona* now still counted the feudal title of a Venetian *nobil uomo*, — *Contarini Conte del Zaffo!*

It was from Venice, the wonder of the Middle Ages, who was said to have joined the two great epochs of the world's civilization — « *che collegava il presente al passato* » — that the galleys of the Crusades, bearing the Knightly population of Europe were wont to weigh anchor and it was she who gained for Saint Louis the precious Crown of Thorns for which he built the *Sainte Chapelle*.

It was a daughter of Venice, Caterina Cornaro, called by the Senate when it betrothed her to James of Lusignan, — « *Caterina Veneta Lusignan, dilectissima et obsequentissima fiola* », — who held the Key to the Orient as Queen of Cyprus; that romantic island worthy of the Greek Goddess to whose cult it was once sacred and whose fabled birth from the foam of the sea was on its shores, conquered by Richard Cœur de Lion on the Third Crusade, and sold to one of the *Sires de Lusignan*. It was in 1468 that this patrician child of Marco Cornaro, *una giovinetta della nobiltà veneziana*, was chosen by the Republic to be the bride of the last of the *Lusignani*; and a strange awakening it must have been, from the Oriental seclusion of a Venetian *serraglio* into the luminous air of

a Venetian *festa lagunare* ! Forty patrician matrons in the gilded *peote* of the Doges suite, were waiting at the marble *riva* of her father's palace to conduct this fourteen year old child of so strange and romantic a destiny to the very steps of the *Scala d'oro* of the *Palazzo Ducale*, there to be met again by other *nobil donne*, all marvellously decked in those glowing stuffs and Oriental pearls so dear to Paolo Veronese.

More solemn still must have been the returning a betrothed Queen on whom the Senate had already bestowed a *dot* in ducats, jewels and possessions, the same golden haired little girl, to lead the same jealously guarded life in her father's palace at *San Polo*.

It was in 1472 when the three Levantine galleys at last arrived to demand the bride that she stepped from the *riva* of that palace of her child hood into the splendor of the *Bucintoro* with its suite of barges, to be adopted as the daughter of the Republic and then to be conducted by four of its proudest galleys to that island of Cyprus where her royal spouse awaited her. And it was to Venice she returned in 1488, when the *Repubblica* itself had despoiled her of her kingdom still *filia nobi-*

lis Marci, to be received, as only Venice could receive with her Oriental taste for splendor and magnificence and her proud marbles and prouder dignity!

There at the *Lido* where only sixteen years before she had deeded away all her girlish property in solemn *testamento*, in very deed leaving behind her forever the *giocondità* of her maiden glory, this same still beautiful Catherine Cornaro was met by the Doge in curious semblance of triumph, really the triumph of a resistless Republic; for *Sua Serenissima*, the Doge himself, was but the highest creature of that magnificent Venice; the gold and purple of his robes was but her royal insignia, his bejeweled Phrygian cap but pointed to her Eastern dominion, his silver trumpets but heralded her glory, and the lighted taper borne before him but signified her sacred power! A Doge of Venice, the proudest of princes, the most romantic of all powers and yet as tradition puts into the mouth of a Loredan: « *Ama-rei meglio essere una delle unità che compongono il Consiglio dei Dieci di quello che brillare isolato, qual magnifico zero cinto la fronte di una vana corona* » ; — better to be one of that unit that forms the Council of Ten than

shine alone that magnificent zero whose forehead is bound by an empty crown.

Once more in the matchless fantastic beauty of the Bucintoro with its gilded carvings and its flowery Damascan silks that swept the waves in very lust of their dominion, Caterina Cornaro, now only a symbol for the Republic's Oriental power, was borne back to *San Marco*. And though the limpid mirror of the lagoons was deep tinged with the gold and crimson velvet sail's of triumphal barges, and a hundred gondolas of the patricians and a hundred of the State paid her homage, while from the tall *Campanili* of Venice came the strange sweet sea voice of her bells, and all that royal basin of San Marco was pulsing to the « *strepito di artiglieria e rimbomba di Trombe, Tamburi e altri strumenti* », yet that romantic throneless Queen of Cyprus, the object of this *Festa lagunare* had met, like the Venice of to day, her « *giorno dei fati* ». « *Vestita di veludo negro, con vello in testa, con zoie a la zipriota* », — dressed in black velvet, with a veil on her head and jewels in the Cyprian fashion, she seemed the *idealità bionda* that ever inspired the splendor loving Venetians, a woman no longer in that *età fresca* so dear

to the Florentine painters, but in all the perfection of a voluptuous maturity; a figure whose romantic fame was fixed in the immortal colors of Bellini, Giorgione, Palma, Titian and Paul Veronese, and has been sounded down the ages into the music of Saint Georges, Scribe, Halevy and Donizetti!

In 1508, the body of this woman that had enjoyed the strange phantom pomp of those romantic titles: « *Serenissima et dilectissima fiola* » of the most Magnificent Republic, « *per la gracia Reina di Jerusalem, Cipri et Armeniæ* », was borne from her great Palace on the Grand Canal to the parish church of *San Cassiano* on a night of wind and rain, a night, « *teribelissimo di vento pioza et tempesta grossa grossa com uno ovo!* » most terrible with wind, rain and great hail large as an egg.

On such a night « *con do preti la croze et do dopiere* » (with two priests the Crossbearer and two tall waxen torches), the dead Queen of Cyprus was carried alone along the dark *rui*, by water washed palaces, and shadowing bridges to rest in the marble vaults of *San Cassiano* until the state funeral five days after. Then once again the proud Republic that had ever accorded her all pomp and

stripped her of all power sent its dignitaries in scarlet and purple, and its *nobil donne* in *lutto*, and had all that was mortal of Caterina Cornaro borne by a great bridge of *barche* constructed in a night across the *Canal grande* to the church of the *Santi Apostoli*, while in sign of her royalty, the royalty of a daughter of Venice, the Senate had laid on her bier a crown of the jewels of San Marco! — « *una corona di quelle di le zoie di San Marco di sopra in segno è raina* ».

The Republic that could make and unmake the Queen of Jerusalem, Cyprus and Armenia is fallen is past away, though the three bronze pillars of Leopardi from which once floated the crimson and gold standards of *Venezia dominante* for the Victories of Cyprus, Candia and Morea still stand before St. Marks. The Venice of the League of Cambray that has held her own against all the Powers of Europe is fallen among the costly marbles of her Byzantine palaces, embalmed in the Oriental perfume of her great Ducal Chapel, the Sepulchre of St. Mark. The holy glamour of the Crusades that first showed her Queen of the Adriatic where for six centuries she had stood alone on her lagoons is past forever with those other

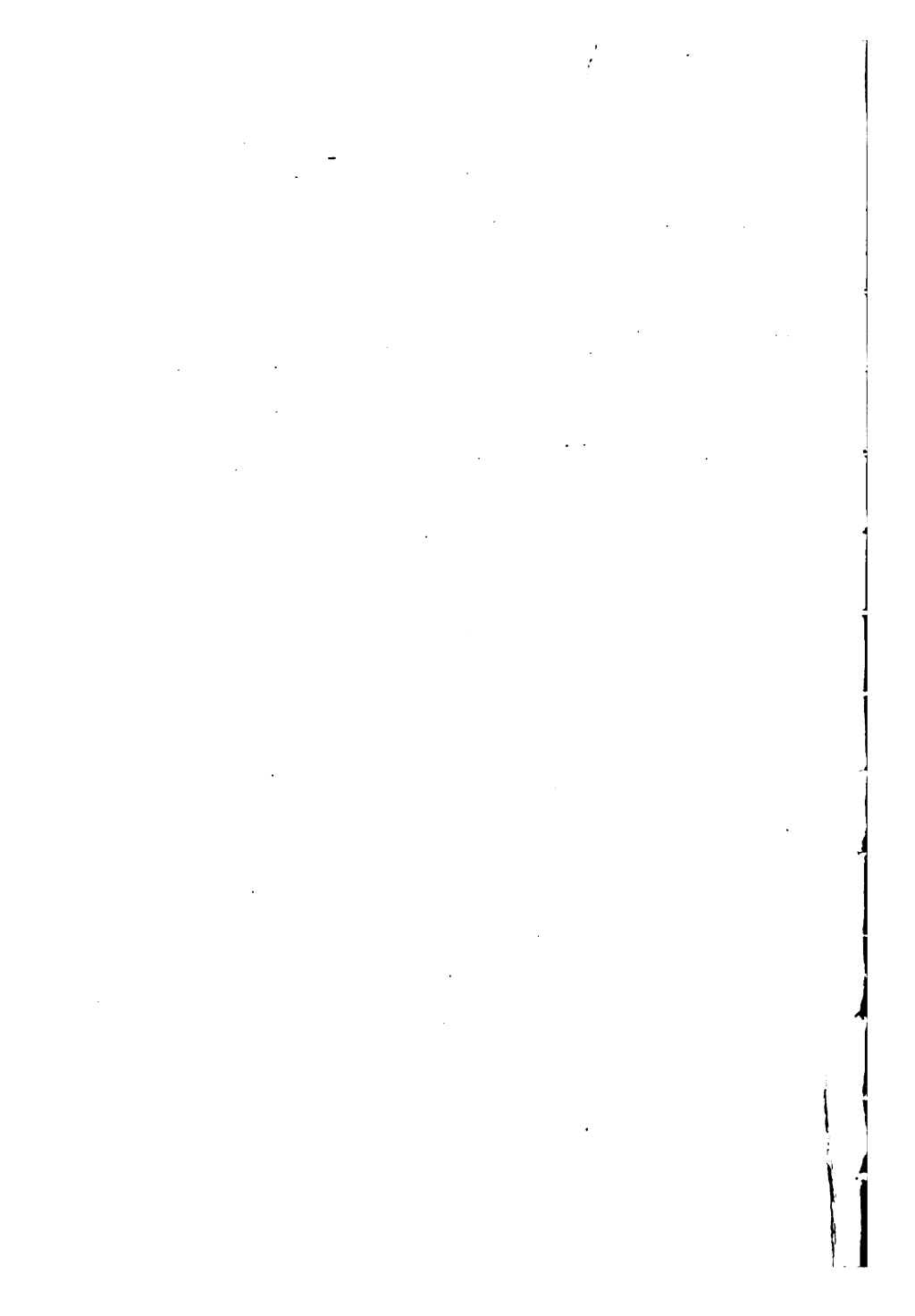
six centuries of dominion and powers that followed.

As the arms of Lusignan had fallen before the *leone d' oro in campo rosso*, so a century later this island of Cyprus was wrested from the Republic to be added once again to the Ottoman dominion. That smiling island of the Orient that had been her glory became a golden apple of dissension coveted by the Sultan and claimed by the Dukes of Savoy: and though Venice proudly held to her possession and the Syrian titles of her nobles, yet at last that golden perfumed wine, with the grains and olives, flax and salt and sumach and all that yielded a revenue of 360,000 ducats slipped from her hold, lost too, forever to the House of Savoy, and turned once again into the East.

Venice the Queen of the Sea had defended that stepping stone to Syria and Constantinople as her most precious possession: « *il regno più honorato, più fertile se ben più lontano che abbia questo dominio* ». And now, three hundred years later, it is curiously interesting to read the statement of the greatest maritime power of our century in the speech of Mr. Chamberlain made before the house of Commons in August of 1898, on that roman-

tic island which has already cost the English government «about half a million». Mr. Chamberlain regards Cyprus as a colony which it is well worth while «to develop in a reasonable and cautious manner», and finds that on the whole this possession once so dear to the Venetian Republic, is «cheap at a cost to the Imperial Exchequer of 33,000 pounds a year!». ».





THE ARSENAL



The Arsenal



The very year 1571 in which the Republic lost Cyprus, her famous Arsenal that so long kept back all the Orient from Christian Europe, was able to put forth a fleet for the destruction of the entire Turkish force at Lepanto!

From these Venetian *cantieri* the French Crusaders in 1203 had called for five hundred sails, and a fleet was constructed, armed and equipped within the year at the demand of the people of Venice assembled in the church of San Marco, by their sanction : « *Noi lo vogliamo* » — we wish it.

And Enrico Dandolo in the long flowing mantle of crimson silk that completely enveloped the *sacra persona* of a Doge of Venice, had arisen in the *tribuna* and begged from the people the command of these galleys, in spite of his ninety years. And as he knelt before the altar, their Doge and Admiral, his aged head veiled in its coif of fine linen — in memory of the anointing oil of Christian Kings, — the Patriarch had crowned the *Corno Ducale* with the Crusader's Cross.

These five hundred Venetian galleys had taken the very walls of Constantinople and gained for their Admiral the strange title of — « *Signore della quarta parte e mezza dell' impero romano* ». And it was to Enrico Dandolo that Byzantium yielded at last those countless treasures of Sta. Sophia, borne back to San Marco with the subtle perfume of the Orient still about them and the splendid sorcery of Eastern color still glowing in their marble veins to exalt the imagination of a Titian or warm the heart of a Giorgione.

The proudest cities of the Levant had yielded their rich stores to those galleys of Venice. The Saracens had fallen before them at Ascalon and they had brought victory to the









Northern Crusaders at Jaffa bearing back to San Marco as their trophy those strange white columns of San Saba, from San Giovanni d' Acri.

Their city of the sea was a city of treasures piled in fantastic beauty between sea and sky and their high beaked merchant ships carried the coveted commerce of the Orient on which ever hinged the rise and fall of powers and principalities, - as even now, America stands at the new gate of the Philippines.

While in the North, the Teutonic barons were but strengthening their castle walls and widening their moats. Venice to protect her commerce and to maintain absolute her high title of Queen of the Adriatic, had conceived in the work room of her Arsenal those famous *galeazze* whose command was an honor given only to patricians, and which moved each by three hundred oarsmen, with capacity for two hundred soldiers, and pledged to accept battle with any hostile force not greater than twenty five, had subdued Saracens and Slavs before Charlemagne had put his iron crown on Italy.

Marco Polo, the first of all the voyagers into the far East, had brought back to the

Doge of Venice the key to that splendid commerce in the precious first knowledge of an Empire that contains today one half the population of the globe ! The famous account of those voyages, the *Milion*, was written in the Venetian dialect, and one of the latest acquisitions to the *Museo Civico* of Venice is a gigantic Japanese statue in sitting posture, authentically described as a contemporary attempt to honor her most adventurous son.

The *Arsenale*, — (in the Venetian *darsena* from the Arabic *al sanat* or *dâr sinâ* at meaning the place where one works, or *il lavorio*), — as befitting a people that founded *la Patria loro nell' acqua*, was sacred as something akin to the sea, the source of all their strength. Its two thousand *Arsenalotti*, or *Figli dell' Arsenale*, were licensed workmen, and formed a class apart. Venice loved to cherish them as her most trusted sons, to whom she accorded all kinds of privileges, — and from whom she expected every possible service in an hour of need. In old age they were supported by her, and their young sons were received into the corporation at eighteen with the most unquestioning confidence by a mother country that even offered them a

complete education in all branches of their avocation, — strange trustfulness for Venice, the most cruelly suspicions of States!

Dante, himself, who is said to have written most bitterly against the Venetians, calling them, in a certain violent letter, descendants of those Greeks and Dalmatians, « *introduttori di pessimi e vituperosissimi costumi* », was yet moved to fix in his immortal master verse the Titanic workings of an Arsenal, which gave Europe models for her navies and from which thundered the first canon of Christendom.

In that evil place which forms the eighth circle of the Inferno and which Dante likens to a large and profound well its walls of stone and of the color of iron, there are depths within depths and in the centre a valley divided into ten ditches called *Bolge*, where are punished the deceivers of men.

Luogo è in Inferno detto Malebolge
Tutto di pietra e di color ferrigno,
Come la cerchia, che d'intorno 'l volge.

Stopping with Virgil on a height above the fifth of these miserable pits and its vain

cries, Dante looked and saw it wondrous dark :
 where « boiled, not by fire, but by divine art,
 a thick pitch that clung to its viscid walls ».

Quale nell' arzanà de' Viniziani
 Bolle l' inverno la tenace peccò,
 A rimpalmar li legni lor non sani.
 Che navicar non ponno; e'n quella vece
 Chi fa suo legno nuovo e chi ristoppa
 Le coste a quel che più viaggi fece;
 Chi ribatte da proda e chi da poppa;
 Altri fa remi, ed altri volge sarte;
 Chi terzeruolo ed artimon rintoppa;

— So in the arsenal of the Venetians, boils
 in winter the viscous pitch to caulk over those
 worn ships that cannot sail, and here, instead
 they are building a new hulk or stopping up
 the ribs of one that has made many voyages;
 here they are nailing up a prow and there
 a poop: some are making oars and others are
 twisting cordage; there they are patching a
 foresail and a mizzen sail.

The Arsenal that furnished the decks made
 glorious by the deeds of Venetian admirals
 from Dandolo to Emo must have been even
 to Dante's eye in that early *trecento* a seeth-
 ing workshop of trained *Arsenalotti* whose
 master art had provided the fifteen transport

galleys for Saint Louis, as well as those three thousand ships of commerce that turned towards Venice the intoxicating wealth of Constantinople and Trebizond, Southern Russia and Tartary, Alexandria and the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus, Candia and Morea. These Masterworkmen who were mathematicians, architects, pilots, economists, foresters, and hydrostaticians, imagined the first use of powder for the destructive force of their projectiles, and moulded the canon that became the mightiest argument of Venice's diplomacy!

As this city made of the sands of the sea honored the commanders of her galleys so she honored the *Arsenalotti*. From them was chosen the guard of honor of that most noble body of the Republic, the *Maggior Consiglio*; and they appeared on state occasions adorned with pikes and a sort of *baton* of the crimson of San Marco as insignia of their high privilege. They alone were deemed worthy the posts at the oars of the *Bucintoro*, and after the mystic marriage of the Sea, they dined in the palace with the Doge and the Patriarch and each man received a *regalo* of four flasks of Greek wine, a box of *confetti* bearing the Do-

ge's arms, a leathern case of drugs for the accidents of his trade, and a purse of silver!

The *Leone Alata* had become the proud symbol that floated from Venetian galleys, that winged lion whose most ancient *bas relief* shows him in the midst of waves, his mighty paws grasping a closed Gospel, while wings of Gothic power seem to be bearing him up from the sea; just as that strange Assyrio-Babylonian model, the bronze Lion of the Piazzetta standing erect on his column of Oriental granite, with his forefeet on the open book where for five hundred years his searching eyes counted the victorious galleys coming in over the sea, represented *Venezia dominante* even on *terra ferma*.

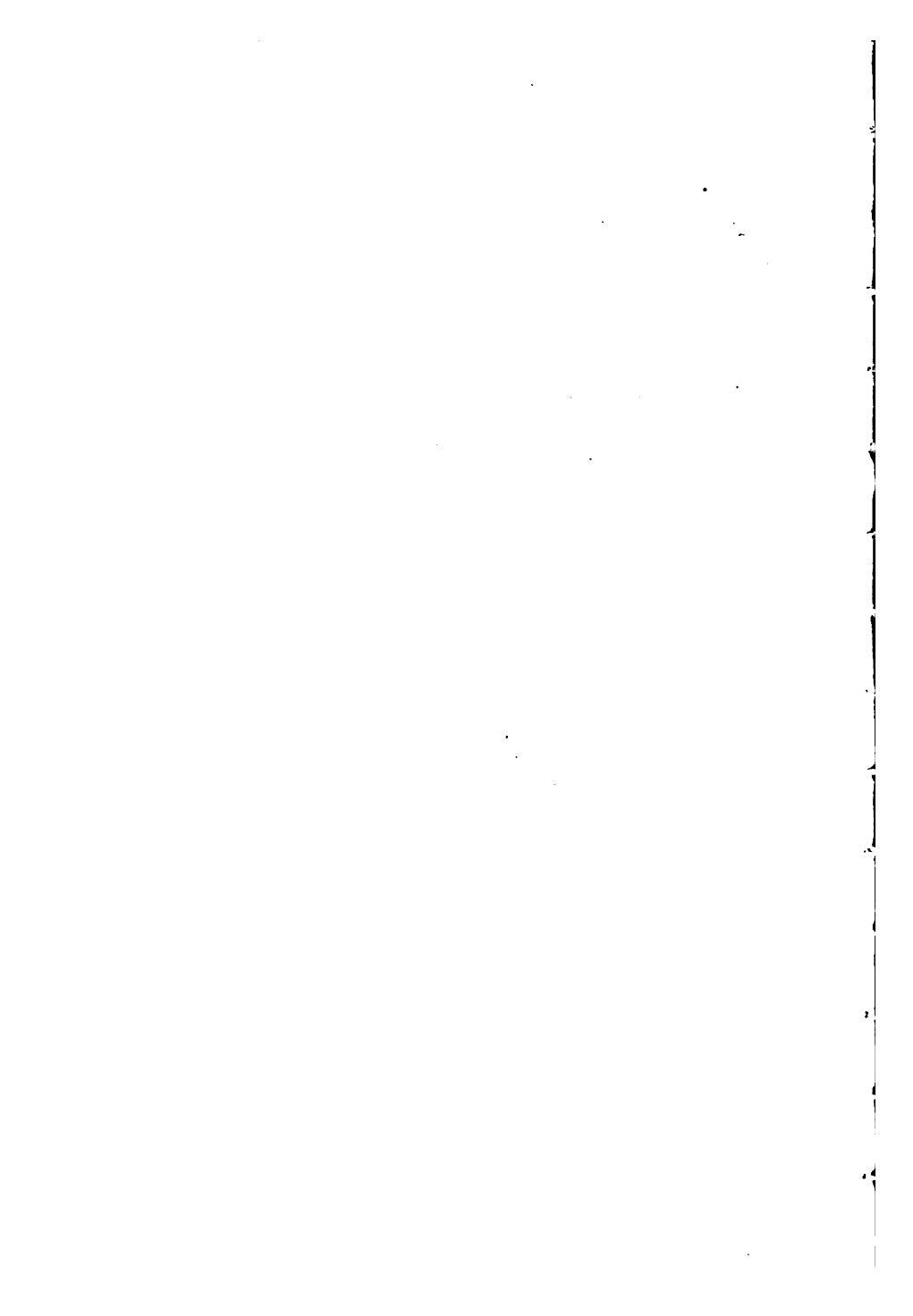
The fertile fifteenth century was almost spent, and still Venice counted forty thousand seamen and more than three hundred heavy war galleys; when the New World dawned on the horizon and the key to the Orient was hers alone no more! Wider gates were open, on which a vaster Republic would one day stand, and though Venice in the intoxicating pride of her supremacy could still refuse Pio II the highway of her waters and block the Adriatic to an *Infante* of Spain,

the heart of her Commerce was chilled and
the pitch grew cold in the *Cantieri* of her
darsena !

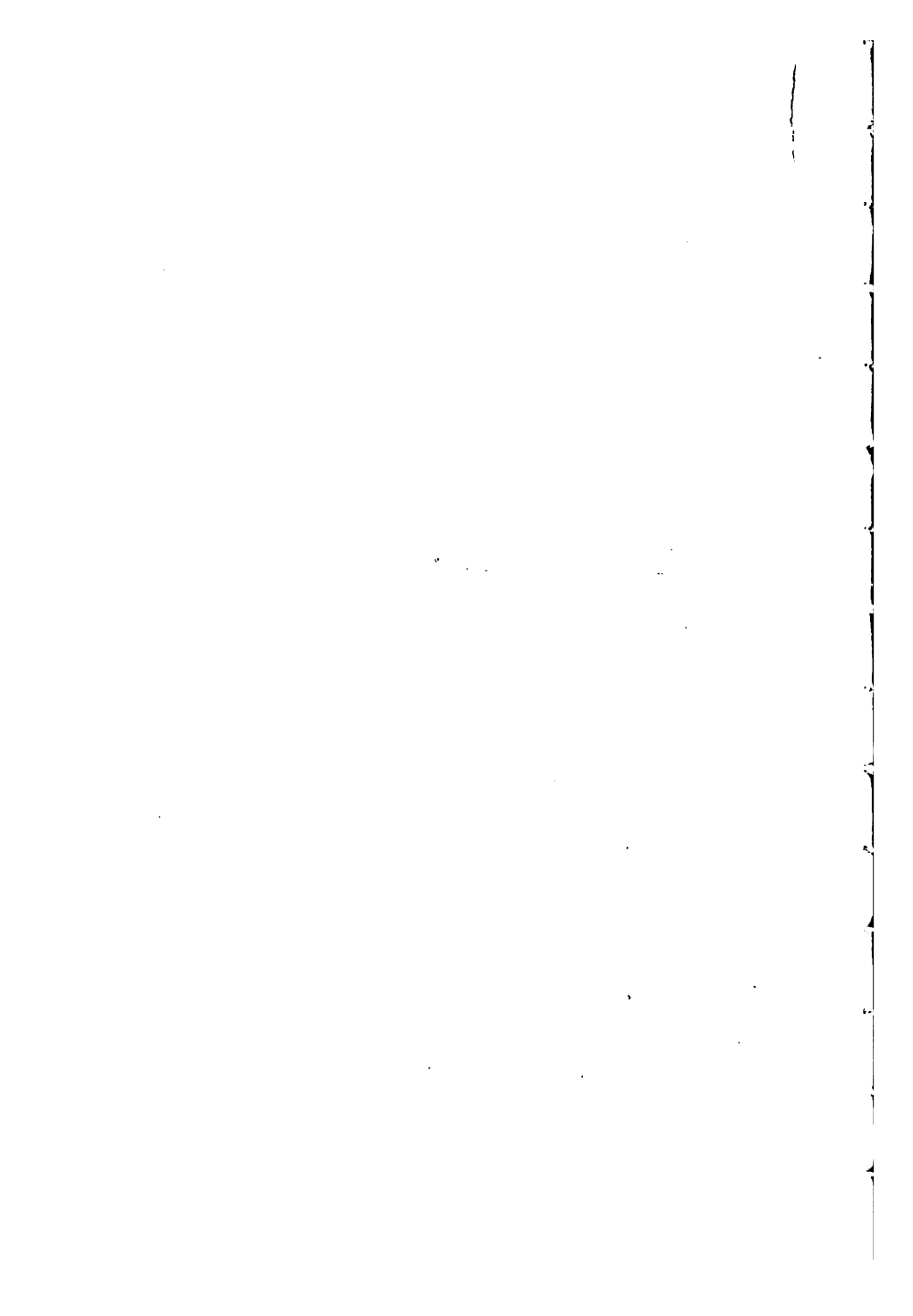
Monta la sabbia al Lido
L' alga nel fondo appare ;
Alla sua donna il mare
È fatto infido.

— The sand is mounting at the Lido, the
water-weeds show on the bottom, the Sea is
unfaithful to his Lady.





“ DEL MAR GRAN DONNA „



“ Del Mar Gran Donna ,,



Venice, *del Mar gran Donna*, — Lady of the Sea, — was ever accustomed to water festivals in which she of all the cities of the world was queen, « in her glorious robe of (gold and purple) », in her ambient of sea and sky!

That consecrated espousal of the sea, which only meant her lasting, eternal dominion over the Adriatic, was in commemoration of that auspicious Ascension day of 998 when her Doge Pietro Orseolo set sail for Dalmatia to begin that long list of naval victories which were to accord to Venice « the trident

of Neptune », ever « the sceptre of the world ! » After that, on each Ascension day, the Doge went over the lagoon to the Lido, the strip of island bar whose eastern sands are washed by the Adriatic, and there where Venice meets the sea, received the solemn benediction of the Bishop of Castello, (in later times the *Patriarca di Venezia*).

This was in the beauty of her youth, in the time of her glory — the glory of the « Venetian Throne », when « mountebank and masker had not laughed their laugh and gone their way », and the silence that followed had not come !

The Doge left the « *magica piazza* » in the *Buzin d'oro*, a gilded ship of state whose mighty oars were moved by a hundred and sixty-eight of the famous *Arsenalotti*, and whose ponderous mediaeval shape was adorned with that luxurious carving so natural to the prodigal genius of the Venetians.

High priest, as it were, of the exalted *Repubblica*, in his superb *sottanella* and mantle of crimson velvet, and his long collar of ermin, to signify that as leader of the people he keep unstained « *lo Onore e la Candidezza dell' animo suo* », the Prince of the Ve-

netians crowned by that *Corno ducale* whose Phrygian shape strangely recalls the *galeri* of the Greek heroes, sat enthroned in all the magnificence of a State that was indeed the Bride of the Sea. On this deck entirely covered with crimson and gold fringed velvets there were seated the Patriarch and the Grand Ducal Council, and the most illustrious and princely guests and foreign Ambassadors, over whom there floated from the gilded *antennae* the Standard of the Republic prouder than all their Empires, — the golden lion of St. Mark in a splendour of crimson ground with golden fringe, its heavy paw resting on the open book where were written in all surety these words: « *In hoc signo vinces* ». And so indeed by this sign of her naval standard, did Venice conquer all the east: — by that winged *lion*, really the symbol of the *Christ* as he is set forth by the special Gospel of Mark and called « the Lion of the tribe of Judah!

Fit figure head of a Republic whose basilica was a *Chiesa Aurea* lined with its myriad *tesserae* of gold-leaf held in their transparent enamel of Venetian glass, the *Bucintoro* was washed with the gold of many thousand *zecchini*, and advanced with the state-

liness of dragging silks and wave-washed velvets, priceless stuffs of Oriental tissue and colors one can only see in Venice's warm skies mirrored in that voluptuous lagoon « forever changing yet the same forever ».

Where now the orange and red sails of the Chioggia boats burnished into subtle beauty by the Adriatic sun and the African *scirocco* file in and out bearing their bounty of fish and fruit, there then swept on toward the sea the twenty towing *barche* of this *Vittoria navale* and its accompanying train drawn on as toward a magnet, the *peote* of the patricians, and the splendid *bissone*, the garlanded boats of the fishermen, and the strangely marked gondolas of the courtesans, obliged to keep alight their rose colored lanterns at prow and stern and sumptuous above all the rest !

In the intoxicating beauty of such spectacles that made drunk with pride whoever had the fortune to be a Venetian, the true prophesy was unheeded :

Se non cangi pensier, un secol solo
Non conterà sovra'l millesim' anno
Tua libertà che va fuggendo a volo !

Off that very island of Sta. Elena which saw the final adieux of the Sovereigns of Germany to the King and Queen of Italy, the *Patriarca* was once accustomed to meet the *Bucintoro* to give his blessing to the sacred marriage ring, — *dal mistico sposalizio*, — whose collet of onyx, lapis lazuli and malachite bore the sculptured image of the book of San Marco. Once outside the lagoon where the Adriatic meets the Lido a vase of *acqua santa* was poured on the blue sea and into the mixing of the waters the Doge dropped the ring, completing the marriage rite of Venice and the Adriatic with these words:

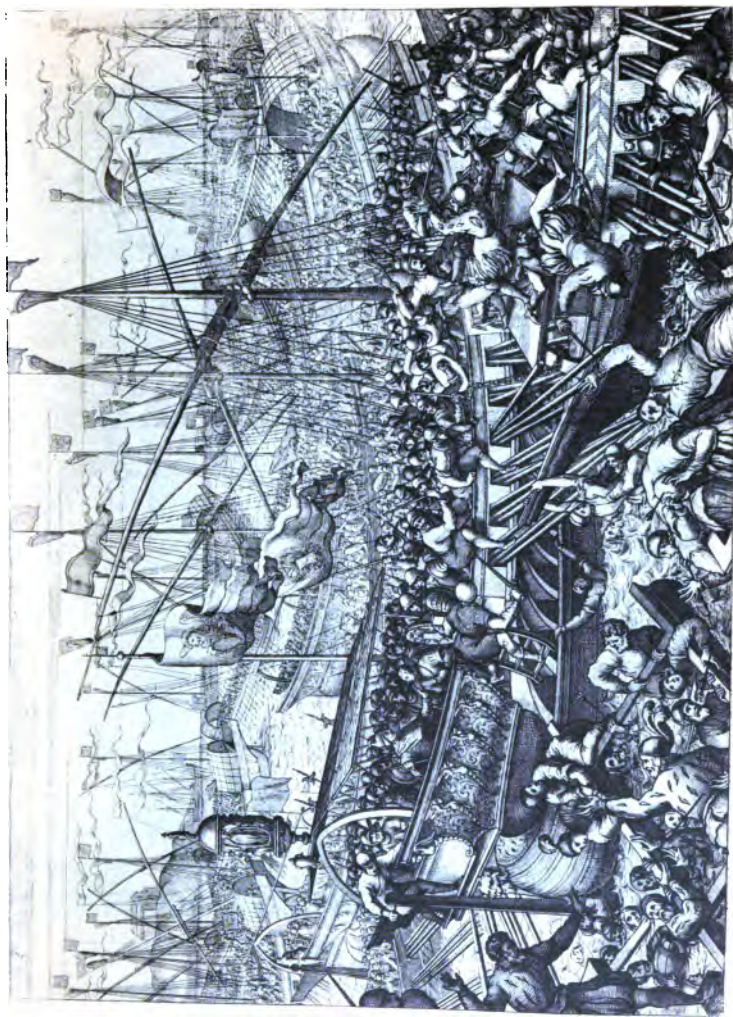
« Desponsamus te, mare in signum veri perpetuique dominii : » and the people with uncovered heads chanted the *Inno del Bucintoro* !

These bridal songs of Venice were unique among the hymns of the Nations. Like pacans to the sea god of their strength, they must have unconsciously taken their measure from the inspiration of the Adriatic. on whose mystic blue Venice rests like some phantom ship ever ready to put out to sea.

From that idealistic allegory of Bellini, an early Renaissance Venus in the conch like poop of a shallop holding the smooth globe

on her knee and with no other train than the wave-washed water-babies that cling to her robe; to the vigorous symbolism of Tiepolo's « *Venezia disposta a Nettuno* », where the delectable sea queen with the imperious gesture of a Cleopatra is receiving the riches of her wave-worn spouse; Venice's painters have ever bowed before the spell of her domination. Refugees from the northern scourge of Attila the Romanized Venetii had come down to the sea trusting their lives and fortunes to its rush grown islands, and the sea had most wonderfully protected them, until a marble city had risen on its sands fair as the Venus of the Bellini Allegory, and prosperous as the lavish *Abbondanza* of Paolo Veronese.

Only one of these hymns of the Bucintoro has been preserved in a Manuscript of the *Biblioteca Marciana*, the words by Zacharia Valaresso a Venetian patrician, and the music by Antonio Lotti one of that long line of distinguished *Maestri della Capella di San Marco*: of whom the latest, a young priest of twenty-five, Don Lorenzo Perosi, is today stirring the sleeping chords of Italy's *Musica Sacra* by his cycle of dramatic oratorios!





This Antonio Lotti, whose father was director of the Electoral Court Chapel of Han-növer was a Venetian, in all but birth, and followed the influences of that *scena incantata* of the eighteenth century, where the youngest of the arts found such varied expression. His madrigals with their verses of Valaresso breathe the fantasy and color of that strange last hour of the Republic, « *dilette rauschende Symphonie* » whose portentous *motif*, Tiepolo caught in the colors of his boundless spaces, in those luminous sky-ey reaches abounding in the *verve* and the love of life — in the cult of grace and beauty!

In a history of the *Musica Sacra* of that Ducal Chapel of San Marco, (which only since the fall of the Republic has been the *Basilica Patriarcale*, and whose youngest *Maestro* Leo XIII has nominated « *Direttore Perpetuo d'onore del Collegio dei Cappellani Cantori e dei Cantori Pontificii* », in the words of an Italian clerical paper, « the homage of subjection and reverence which the disciple Mark renders to the Master Peter »), the manuscript of Lotti's *Madrigale* of the *Bucintoro* is declared to be the only composition on a profane subject ever held in the

archives of the *Capella*, — « *unica opera che vi si trovi di profano soggetto* ». This *Madrigale a quattro voci* sung in 1736 in the last era of the golden ship of State at that « *antica cerimonia dello sposalizio del mare Adriatico* » was so grateful to the hearts of the people that it was quickly copied and recopied not only by the music-loving Venetians; but even « those distinguished strangers who came in great numbers to the spectacle quickly spread it in every place where musical art had its *cultori* ».

The last era of the « Bride of the Adriatic » had begun. She who in her youth had had Kings, Emperors and Popes at her feet; who had withstood the wooing of Charles V and Louis XII, the proud Visconti and the mightiest of the Popes until at last she had faced all Europe from her lagoons and kept back all the East with her galleys, was fallen now into the madness of a *Carnevale*, in which there was no unmasking, a fatal solace of the flesh for which she has suffered an eternal fasting. The sceptre of power dropped from her hand. She who had withstood Pepin and Charlemagne and the Emperors of the East forgot her vows to the Sea in the amor-

ous intregue of her palaces and the jealous mysteries of her canals; forgot that portentous investiture of power which had robed her, in the person of her *Serenissimo Principe*, in the flowing crimson mantle of dignity and equal state before Alexander III and Frederic Barbarossa; forgot the mystic gift of the ring, a solemn sign of recognition from the Pope to her Doge, because she had curbed this northern Emperor, the mightiest of the Hohenstanfen!

« Ricevi questo o Ziani, col quale tu e tuoi successori userete ogni anno di sposare il mare. Acciocchè i posterì intendano che la Signoria di esso mare acquistata da voi per antico possesso e per ragioni di guerra è vostra ». Receive this (ring) oh Ziani which thou and thy successors shall make use of each year to espouse the sea, in order that posterity shall understand that the sovereignty over this sea acquired by you through ancient possession and the rights of war is yours.

Yet in this *Inno* of 1736 she seems still wrapped about in her Doge's robes, in the pride of her crimson and pearls, even as she posed for the last of her painters, while her young men were squandering her riches behind the

masks of the *Ridotti*, and playing her proudest names away like pearls dissolved in wine! Yet the patrician pulse still thrilled at the magic sound of *Sammarco* and the ruined Republic could offer one more great name to her *Epopœa* of the sea in Angelo Emo the last of her Admirals and « the last of the Venetians » ; he who declared before the Senate after the shipwreck of his fleet, « *Offro tutti i miei beni per riparare la perdita che ha fatto la Repubblica* », I offer all my possessions to repair the Republic's loss!

IL BUCINTORO

Madrigale del Maestro Antonio Lotti

(as we find it in the *Codici Italiani*, Classe VII, N. 1118, of the *Biblioteca Marciana*):

« *Spirto di Dio ch' essendo il mondo infante
Tanto nell' onda il piè posar vi piacque
Fate hete quest' acque
Dove la nostra fè più salda e pura
Di pietà e di valor con prove tante
Dei secoli nel corso intatta dura
E stendosi regnante
Da mare a mar la veneta fortuna
Fin ch' eclisse fatal tolga la luna* ».

(Spirit of God who while the world was still in its infancy
 So loved to place your foot on the waves,
 Make glad these waters.
 Where our faith stronger and purer
 After so many proofs of devotion and valor
 In the course of the centuries may remain intact
 And Venetian fortune may stretch sovereign
 From sea to sea,
 Until a fatal eclipse shall hide her moon forever).

Already Venice was in the twilight of that approaching « *Eclisse fatale* », and the Bucintoro of 1736 was like the last splendid ornament of her sovereign state, destined a half century later to fall in ashes on the sands of *San Giorgio Maggiore*; as the *maestà* of her *patriziato* perished in the flames of the « *Libro d'oro* ».

In that famous *Sala dei Banchetti*, once part of the Ducal Palace, whose austere windows look on the rio of the Bridge of Sighs, the Doge in the later centuries of the Republic received with the most illustrious guests of the « Bride of the Adriatic » those privileged *Arsenalotti* who had been chosen oarsmen of the Bucintoro. And here, at the regal banquet in honor of the *Sposaliizio* other *Madrigali a quattro voci* were offered to com-

plete the splendour of the sea pageant. These songs, written for the accompaniment of *violini* and *contrabasso*, were unlike the music of the Ducal Chapel which was without instruments, and fall midway between the *genere madrigalesco* and the *genere teatrale*, (which a century before had become on the Venetian stage the *musica drammatica* of our modern opera).

AL TRIBUTO DELLI DEI
PER IL BANCHETTO
A 4 VOCI
DEL SIGNOR ANTONIO LOTTI
L'ANNO 1736

(Versi del N. H. Zaccaria Vallaresso p. v.).

Da selve vassalli
Da sudditi fiumi
Mie dive, miei numi
Portate tributi
Dell'Adria regnante
A mensa real.

.
Ma ogni dono
Di chi siede
D'Adria in trono
Pari al merto mai sarà.
Doni più degni
Se offrir volete

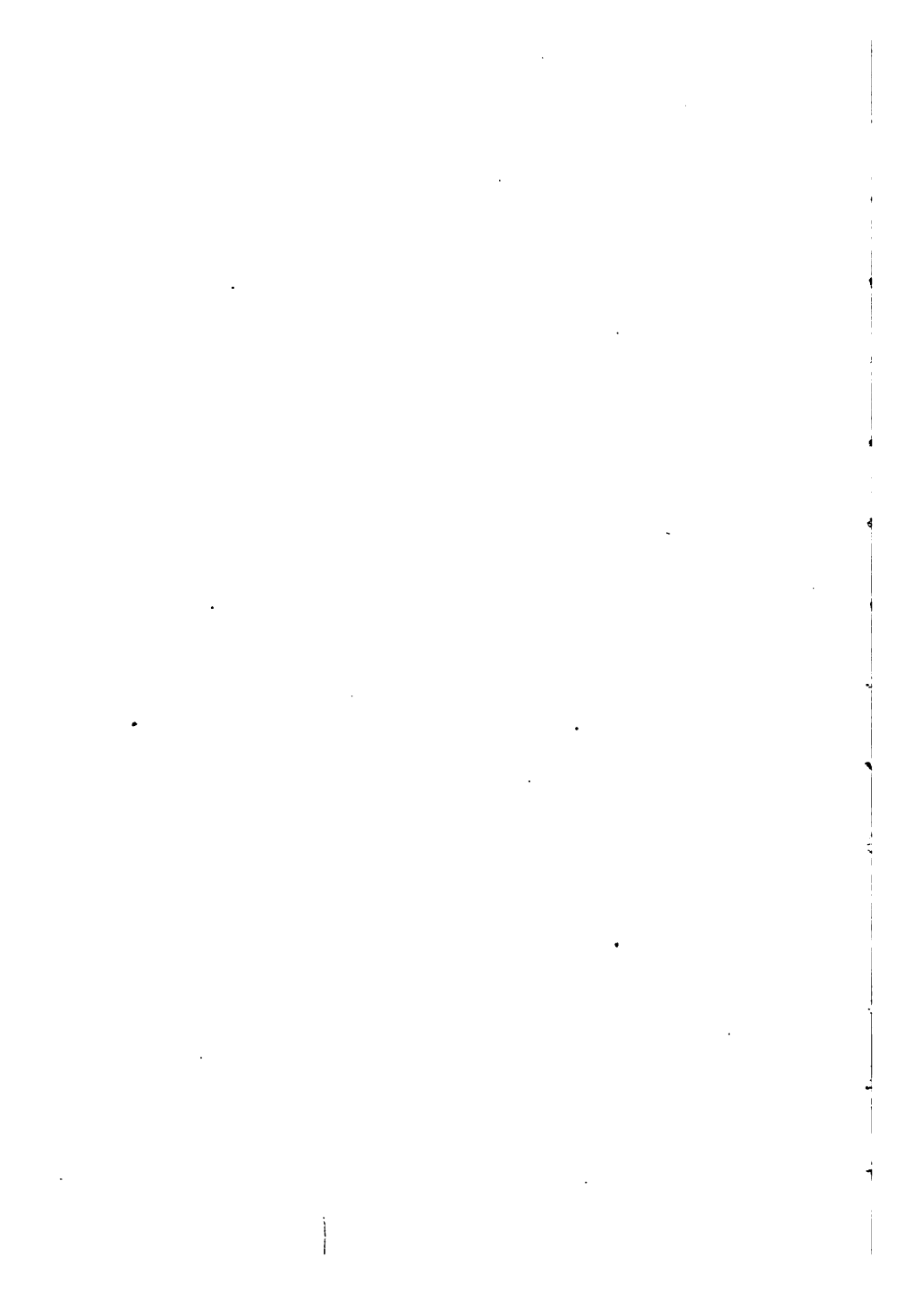
Provincie, regni
 Numi porgete,
 A questa patria
 Ch'ei tanto adora
 Con sì sublime
 Pregioso dono
 Tal duce in trono,
 Solo l'onora
 Onor sarà de' Numi
 Che il patrio loro nido
 Tolto da fato infido
 Vassallo fortunato
 Baci l'Adriaca riva
 Felici sien gli auguri
 De' lieti nostri cuori
 Fra ulivi palme ed allori
 Col saggio e pio
 Marco, il Duce viva.

Since the fall of the Republic this banquet hall has been shut off from even the memories of its grandeur, the *galleria* is closed through which swept the dragging silks of the magnificent *Principe* and his proud patricians, and the stucco garlands and the voluptuous frescoes look down on the council of the Patriarch of Venice in his *Palazzo Patriarcale* with its Judaic inscription: « Haurietis Aquas in Gaudio de Fontibus Salvatoris », where once flowed the coveted Cyprian wine « *bion-*

do e profumato ». Here they would have fêted an Emperor of Germany in the days of the *grandezza Veneziana*, that *grandezza* of an *aristocrazia dominatrice*, when the *vecchie Procuratie* that line the piazza were indeed the palaces of the Procurators of San Marco and no Palazzo Reale had yet usurped a place in their ranks to lodge the Viceroys and Governors of a fallen Republic? This banquet hall of the last two centuries of the Doges, whose windows look on the slow waters of *Canonica*, as they pass under the Bridge of Sighs, and whose walls are still the walls of the Ducal Palace held even greater memories for its Imperial guests than those of Napoleon, Maximilian or Savoy.



“LA VIA DI VENEZIA „



“ La via di Venezia ,,



In 1833 George Sand visiting the abandoned city over whom Austria « *stese le sue ali.... come un lenzuolo di morte* » (stretched her wings like the mantle of the dead), wrote of the Venetian nature :

« *Il faudrait bien des années d'esclavage pour abrutir entièrement ce caractère insouciant et frivole, qui, pendant tant d'années s'est nourrie de fêtes et de divertissements. La vie est encore si facile à Venise : la nature si riche et si exploitable* ».

And who can tell with what peculiar pleasure this Venetian nature still turns to its

water festivals with their own special setting of sea and sky!

Ah! que Venise est belle
Entre son double azur!

She is still the passion of the Venetians, their *bella innamorata*, or their glorious mistress such as their painters have impersonated her; a woman fair as an Oriental pearl and as luxuriously beautiful.

But they do not sing of her beauty as the Neapolitains of Naples, nor glory in the grandeur that was hers, as do the Romans; hers is one of the songs unsung, and the romantic glory of her story is too real even to-day. They rest still under the spell of her, who when she fell remained in her pride forever, « *la Repubblica immutabile, intransigente, conservatrice* ».

Child and spouse of the Adriatic, bound to the sea by the very facts of her existence, founded on its domain of sand and rushes, and receiving her life to this day from its rising and reflux tides, Venice was accustomed to abandon herself to the romantic splendour of her waterways on the grandest occa-

sions of her public life. Until now, at last, « *Città addormentata* », as if in a dream of a past that is gone forever, she still decks herself, Ophelia like, with the flowery garland of pleasure, « *la ghirlanda floreale dei piaceri* », she who so long ago, put aside her nobler helmet of battles.

Théophile Gautier once wrote ;

« *Le grand canal est le véritable livre d'or, où toute la noblesse Venitienne a signé son nom sur une façade monumentale* » :

And this was the *Libro d'Oro* open to the Emperor of Germany as the royal gondola swept down to the sea along that magnificent street *dei Contarini, dei Mocenigo, dei Cornaro*, a sort of historic prelude to the Orient, its pages illuminated like some rare romaunt of the middle ages, with the fairest sculpturing of mystic and intricate Eastern symbols ; a *Libro d'Oro* that tells of the solemnity of a great power, and tells too of its perversion, — a story of such splendour and such romance that it presses on the heart and maddens the brain ; until like the influence of Venice herself, « *elle endort la pensée, agite le coeur, et domine les sens* », and one cries in the sensuous idiom of the

Venetian mother, « *Mi biscola el polmon a vedarte* » : My breast swells at sight of thee.

With the singularity of all things in Venice, that *vaghezza* that has charmed poet and philosopher alike, even her nobility was not given by kings but sprang from herself, the princely republic that was above princes. And so those twelve illustrious families; *i Badoaro*, *i Partecipazio*, *i Barozzi*, *i Contarini*, *i Dandolo*, *i Falier*, *i Gradenigo*, *i Memmo*, *i Polani*, *i Sanuto*, *i Candiano*, *i Tiepolo*, called « apostolic » because from them came the twelve tribunes who elected the first Doge in 697, formed the earliest *veneta nobiltà*, and it was they who, as with a ducal right, left the feudal titles of *marchese* and *conte* to their subjects on the *terra ferma* ! Other later « tribune families » springing always from men who were the actual strength of the State, were added to this first *patriziato* that possessed the only true nobility, the nobility of illustrious deeds, and who held no other privilege or right than that of bearing the simple title of « *nobil uomo Veneziano* » ; while before the ancient grandeur of their names, the genealogical tree of all Christendom whose roots are in the land of the

Crusades, is dwarfed and insignificant. For the *Giustiniani* of Venice spring from the Emperor Justinian, the *Marcello* from the Consul Claudius Marcellus, the *Cornaro* or *Corner* from the Cornelii, the *Contarini* from Aurelius Cotta.

The *Libro d'oro* was the annual record of this golden *patriziato*, in which were inscribed the births, marriages and deaths in its *Famiglie Patrizie*. The Republic gave this official reckoning of her great names, the pride and strength of a princely government, into the custody of three patrician Advocates, the violet vested *Avogadori di comun*, who were the guardians of her laws; and when those laws failed and the Republic fell, the mad imitators of the French Revolution burned the *Libro d'oro* as if in sign of the death of a patrician state.

The most regal of all the cities of the world, a Republic that bestowed favors on kings and withstood the tyranny of popes, Venice was ever accustomed to royal visits when she played the part of guestmaster governor and prince to the most magnificent rulers of Europe.

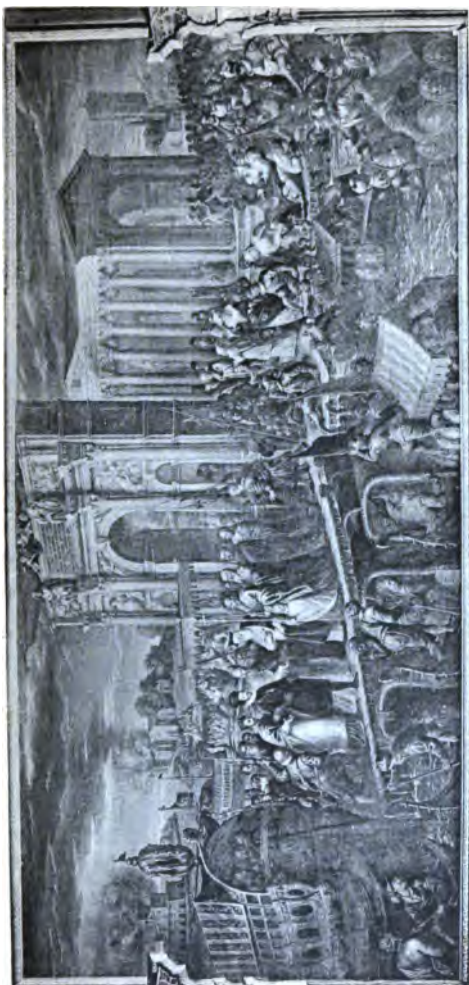
Even in 998 an Emperor of the North,

Otto of Saxony, came to admire this strange city of sea sands and wooden bridges, and, lodged, by the Doge, in the Eastern tower of that first Byzantine draught of the immortal Ducal monument, he « beheld carefully all the beauty of the palace ».

· In 1177 when Venetian galleys had taken prisoner the son of the great Staufenkaiser, and brought his ships back captive to the marble steps of the Piazzetta, the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa himself bowed in sign of peace before the compelling power of this dawning Republic!

The city of the twelfth century with its beginnings of Byzantine palaces rose up out of the sea, as her fair pale mountains, *le pal-lide Dolomiti* rise from the lowlands, with all the purity of her marble whiteness unstained and all the golden color of Oriental ornament still perfect, — in the beauty of her youth, « but with still a sadness of heart upon her and a depth of devotion in which lay all her strength ».

Such was the City of the Rialto that received the Teutonic power of 1177, with those incrustated marble disks of Phrygian purples and Egyptian red, and verde antique, set like



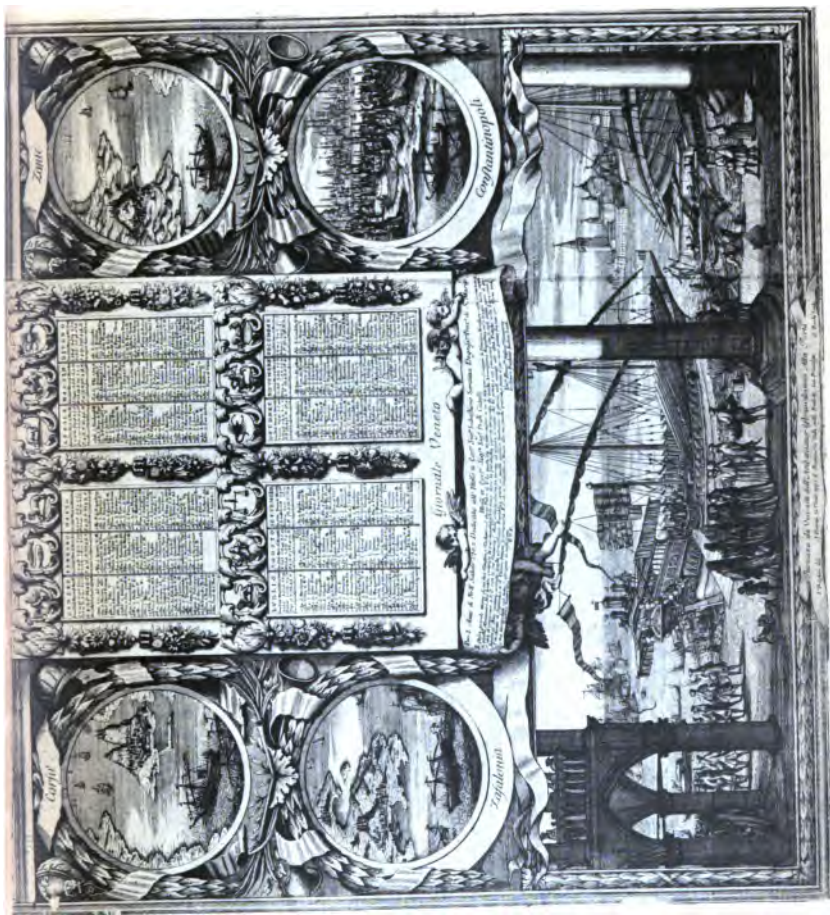
strange Byzantine clasps on the stainless armour of her palaces, more splendid than all the wealth of tapestries that have since brightened their *balcone*.

Emperors and princes came to wonder at this new light of the lagoons whose power already dazzled Europe : the Emperor of Constantinople, Henry king of Dacia on his way to the Holy Sepulchre, Frederic III and Cosimo di Medici, Malatesta and Gonzaga ; all passed across her marble rive and were mirrored in the liquid ways of her patrician palaces.

And in 1574 came Henri d' Anjou on his way to the throne of France choosing for reasons of State « *la via di Venezia* » ; *Venezia*, in the height of her splendid career, which was the beginning of her fall », when she had matured the jewel in the sand, and rounded the pearl in the shell » ; when all in her that was Gothic, all the nobler feeling and strength of her purpose had been expressed in the ineffable grace and elegance of those Venetian palaces from whose strange loveliness one turns still with vague lament in ones heart, « *E pur, no so'l perchè mi pianzaria !* — And yet, I know not why, I would weep !

To Henry III she was the superb ante-

chamber between two thrones. France, still trembling under the shock of St. Bartholomew, was yet nerved with the strength of high faiths and bold deeds and trusted to this third son of Catherine de Medicis, called back from his kingdom of Poland, to wipe out the terrible records of her crime. The Republic of Venice that since the opening of the *cinquecento* had withstood the League of Cambray lost Cyprus and gained Lepanto, had not yet lost her right to be immortal, « *il diritto d'immortalità* »; — « *Tutti per tutti* » still, « *non già tutti per uno o per pochi!* ». So by the right of her seriousness, she held still that *giocondità sana*, the fruit of all purposive power, and the sign of life in the state! Truly noble and worthy the *maestà* of her patrician power was the reception of this king of France. The Duke of Savoy, Emanuele Filiberto was among the princes who came to honor the august entry; Tintoretto in the *furore* of his masterful genius, that his might be the first portrait of the young king, went disguised as one of the *Scudieri* of the Doge to sketch his royal model in the midst of the splendour and power of the Bucintoro; while Gabrieli and his brother composers found in-





spiration for their *melodie soavi* in the harmony and majesty of the sumptuous *fiesta*!

The *Repubblica* through her *Signoria illustrissima* had decreed extraordinary « *accolienze* », for this young Henri d' Anjou as twenty years after she proudly enrolled his successor Henry of Navarre on the pages of the *Libro d' oro*.

In the *Annali Urbani di Venezia* Fabio Mutinelli has left us a curious record of the ordering of events during the royal visit. In June 1574 Henri III fleeing from the crown of Poland to gain that of France arrived in Vienna and by a letter to the Serenissimo Principe of the Republic made known his desire to visit « *la donna dei mari* ».

With that patrician grace only possible to the Venetian, — a creature of sea charged marbles and silent gondola, proud names and prouder laws, — Venice sent one of her greatest nobles, a Brandolino, with the *Senato Veneto* to escort her royal guest from the frontier to Marghera, and there still on the *terra ferma* one of her lieutenants of Friuli, Giovanni Mocenigo brought his guard of honor, and a horse with superb trappings to bear the king to the shores of the lagoon,

where were waiting the gondolas of the young patricians with an accompaniment of music and rich costumes that must have seemed the first note of incantation to this city of sea sands that had « suffered a sea change into something rich and strange ».

The king went first over the still *laguna morta* to Murano, where the famous glass workers seemed to conjure up in the transparent material of their art, the reflected beauty of water and sky, with forms as delicately graceful as the sea growths of the Adriatic. There were fashioned the fine Renaissance shapes of Benvenuto Cellini in vases and beakers of ineffable beauty that shone on the tables of the Medici; and there were bevilled those marvellous mirrors that once reflected all Europe and that hang now dim and shadowy like the shattered dreams of « *le supreme allegrezze* », on the walls of the Venetian palaces. Venice, jealous of this magic of her *arte vetraria*, guarded its secrets with a special *Inquisitor*, and Henri III in royal admiration of its rare gifts created all its masterworkmen *nobili*!

From the mysteries of this most Venetian of the arts the young king approached Ven-

ice by the island bar that serves as her last foothold before the Adriatic. There he was received by the Doge and an illustrious company of Princes, while from the *Lido* to Venice stretched the shimmering silks and gilded antennae of countless *barche* and *bisnone*, and the imposing splendour of the many-oared galleys that formed the guard of the *Bucintoro*. Of the preparations for this reception, Mutinelli's *Annali Urbani* tell us with the simplicity of an official report.

. « Fabio da Canale and Giovanni Mocenigo received orders from the above named *signori* to go on that same day, Sunday the eighteenth, to the Lido in company with the *Bucintoro* newly covered in most beautiful cloth of crimson satin and likewise gilded most richly, studded within with golden stars and at the poop the royal seat placed higher than usual of cloth of gold and its *baldacchino* of the same and adorned round about in like manner and following after were fourteen other galleys on which were the senators and then the *fuste* of the most illustrious Council of Ten, and an infinite number of *barche* covered with tapestries of silk and gold, moving in form of a

square, and for vanguard there was the signor Marco da Molino, Captain of the Gulf, — (or Commander of the Adriatic), — for rearguard the Signor Battista Contarini, Captain of the Candia guard, on the right flank the Signor Fabio da Canale, and on the left the Signor Giovanni Mocenigo, and the vessels in starting from the *ripe* of San Marco fired a great volley of artillery That same evening wonderful musical concerts were given before the royal palace on the canal, as indeed every evening about two o'clock of the night, there were concerts of every kind of instruments in honor of his majesty, by order of the *Signoria illustrissima* On the edge of the lagoon at the end of the bridge towards the sea there was a quadrilateral building 55 feet long, 14 feet wide and 44 feet, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches high which had space for three gates, or I should say more exactly triumphal arches, — after the custom of the Romans, in imitation of that one of Septimius erected by them at the foot of the Campidoglio, — through which one passes to a loggia built immediatly behind them, erected by the talented architect Palladio, under the supervision of the Signori Luigi Mocenigo

and Jacomo Contarini, most honorable gentlemen, most intelligent and of the finest spirit!

Tintoretto's sketch, by far the most precious souvenir of the royal visit, caught in pastel, like a clever reporter's *cronica*, in the travesty of the Doge's servant, developed into the portrait of Vicentino's picture hanging to-day in the *Sala degli Stucchi* of the Ducal Palace.

The king himself in recognition of the princely hospitality of the Foscari, whose palace at the turning of the Grand Canal was his during the short festival of his Venetian visit, left as a souvenir to his patrician host, a splendid jewelled necklace, « *scintillante come le impressioni, soavemente musicate dai Gabrieli, che seco portar dovea incancellabili dalla allora veramente Regina dell' Adriatico* ».

Andrea Gabrieli then best known as Andrea da Canareggio, who had once been a singer of the Ducal choir, had studied under Willaert and passed his novitiate in Germany and had come back at last to be second organist of the Capella Ducale and to yield his talent to the celebration of the naval victories and water festivals of that brilliant *cinquecento*. In an old *stampa* of 1587, among his last compositions, published after his death

by his more famous nephew Giovanni, and edited by Angelo Gordano, we find a *Dialogo* written for the *feste* of Henry III. This leaf that is left us from the musical record of the grandest of Venice's royal visits is a *Madrigale ad otto voci*, but now, according to a curious and beautiful custom of the Venetians, republished as a wedding gift for the

«Nobili Nozze, Barozzi-Foscari, 15 Dicembre 1898,» and dedicated to the father of the bride, by the last of another proud patrician family.

What Zola calls «that long descending inheritance of glory which is so heavy to bear», rests at last on these heirs of the grandest names of a lost Republic.

. Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria;

yet the pride of race, the «grand style» of a princely *patriziato* is quick and not dead; «*la buona e salda fibra*» perhaps is only *intorpidita* and not *recisa*, and needs but the heat of great passions and the impulse of high duties to make it live again. So in this unique offering of some notes of their past grandeur

that seems peculiarly dear to the Venetians, on an occasion of « *felicitazioni ed auguri* », there is yet something of that « *epoca bella di Venezia ancora grande* » that touches the heart and fires the imagination; as in this dedication in 1898 of the Madrigale of the *cinquecento* :

Caro Amico

Nell'epoca bella di Venezia ancora grande, ogni fausto avvenimento era allietato da armonici concetti, certo dolcissimi nel 1574, quando Enrico III di Francia la visitava, se fu scelto il Gabrieli, detto Andrea da Canareggio, per esaltare e commuovere l'ospite illustre, la signoria ed il popolo con melodie soavi. Lo spirito d'imitazione se vuoi, ma io penso invece, il rispetto per un eroico passato, mi portò a far ricercare qualche nota per dedicarla a te in un'giorno solenne pel tuo illustre nome e pel tuo cuore di padre.

La composizione che ho l'onore di offrirti, scritta e concertata dal celebre cinquecentista, non sarebbe veramente adatta alla occasione. Ebbe però lo scopo di concorrere a festeggiare un ospite di Venezia mondialmente noto. Ed io, desideroso di tributare felicitazioni ed auguri nella presente fausta ricorrenza per la tua famiglia, la pubblico per far onore al passato, ai tuoi sposi, ed a te cultore eletto di cose patrie.

Goethe once said that the Venetian was forced to become a new creature, and that

Venice could be compared only with herself. Certain it is that in this city of whose charms nature furnishes but two elements, water and sky, « *due elementi i più indeterminati e universali*, » there is a note of strangeness that has entered into the poorest life of the *popolo*, as it once gave lustre to the proud *lusso* of the *patriziato* and transforms to-day the simplest details of existence; and this note of strangeness, this « *vaghezza* » of a « *natura raga e bella* » made of the *Festa Veneziana* a spectacle that intoxicated the senses and magnified « *la maestà dell'impero* ». Even in the vagueness of Gabrieli's *madrigale* which calls on the nymphs of the sea « *figlie gradite, e ripiene di somm' allo diletto* » to sing the valor of Henri d'Anjou, we are under the charm of the *Donna del mar*, and it is rather *l'aria e il mar* that celebrate Henri than the composer or the poet, who must have rested impotent before their spell. It was the sound of *trombe tamburi e nacchere*, the *musica guerriera* of the middle ages, muffled in the crimson silk and cloth of gold of the *cinquecento*, « *Cantando le palme e le corone*; » the luxury of a Republic at its imperial moment, grown reckless from « *habitual dealing*

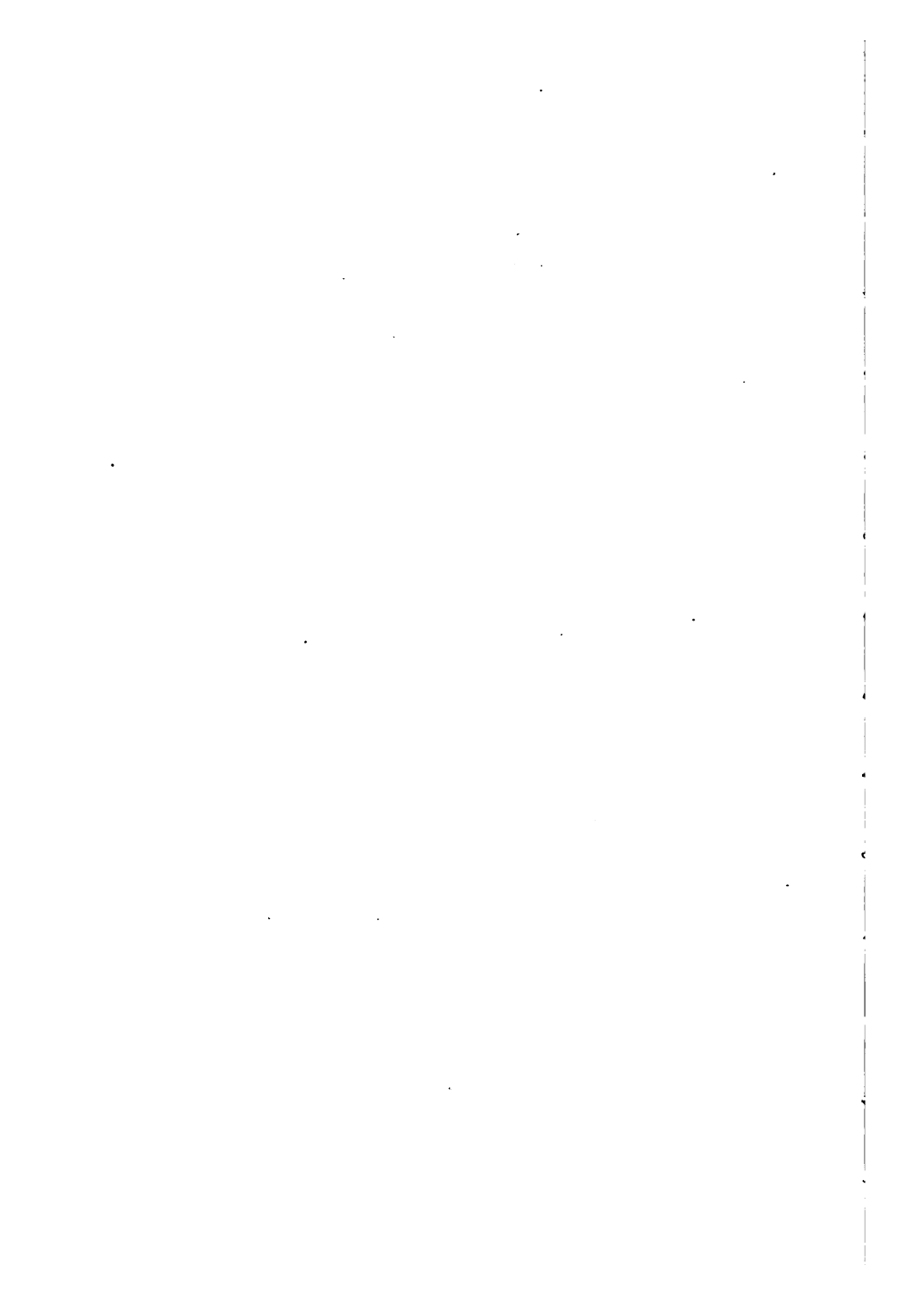
with great things,» a magnificence born of the *grandezza della Patria* and bred in « *la plus triomphante cité du monde,*» whose patrician *barche* trailed in the waters of the lagoon the most precious of Oriental stuffs, priceless *arazzi* and gold embroidered tissues, with that careless elegance that suited so well the pride of *la Repubblica*

Madrigale ad otto voci

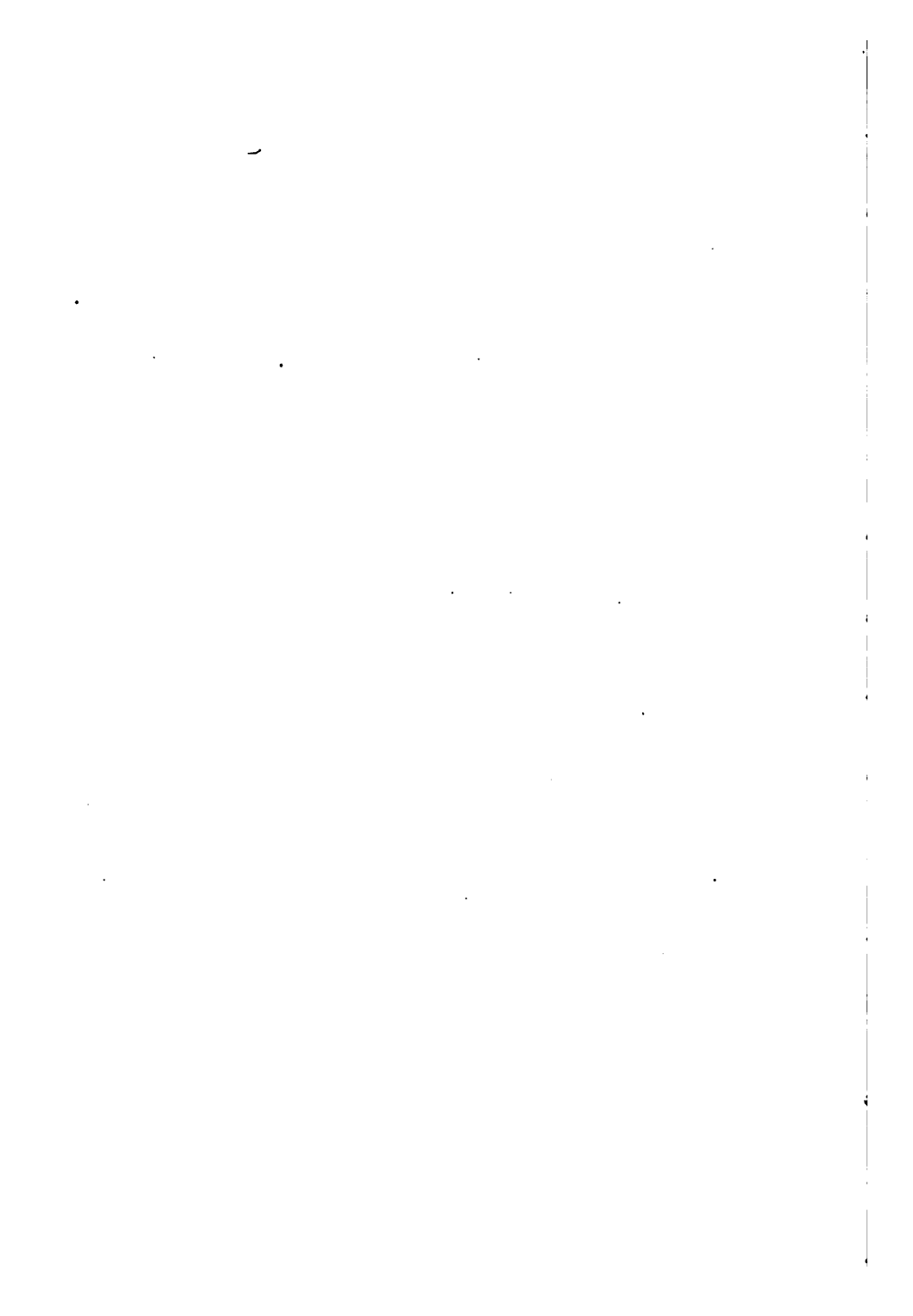
di ANDREA GABRIEL.

Hor che nel suo bel seno
 Lieto e tranquillo il mar d'Adria si posa,
 Per honorar a pieno
 De Sarmat 'il gran Re da Franchi eletto ;
 Voi, voi, e da la più ascosa
 Parte dell' onde uscite,
 Ninfe de l' Ocean figlie gradite :
 E ripiene di somm' alto diletto,
 Cantate de l' invito
 Henrico il gran valor l' altere imprese ;
 E le città difese,
 E i rei nemici superati, e vinti.
 E cantando le palme e le corone.
 L'aria, il mar, e la terra Henrico suone.

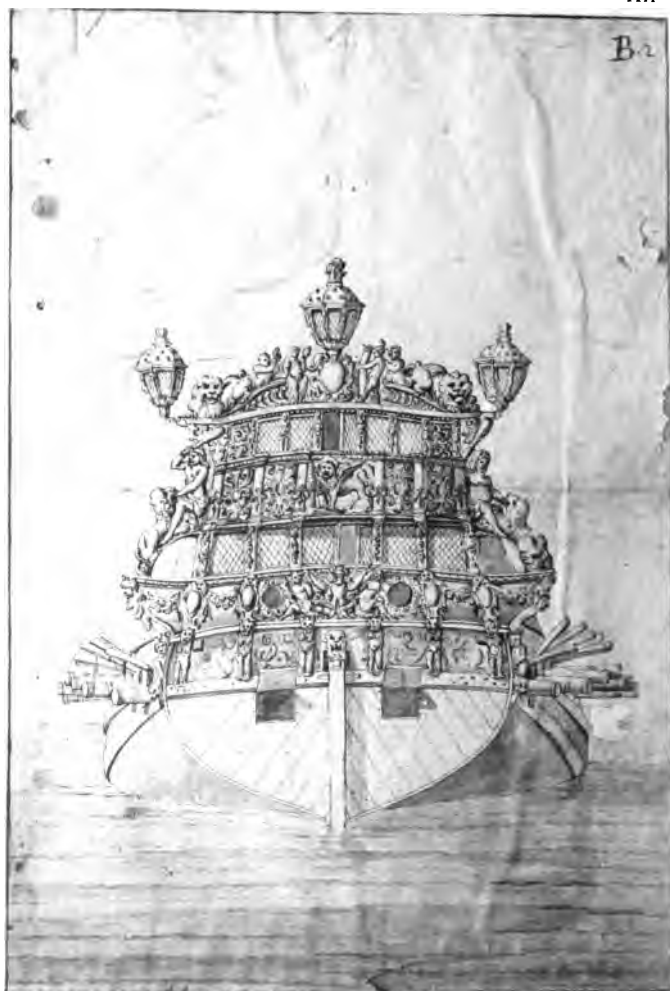




REGATE







Regate



The *regata* the earliest pretext for these brilliant festivals of the grand canal was originally instituted by the Repubblica as an incentive to the young rowers of her war galleys; now it but serves to recall something of the splendour of that luminous past; like the Venetian carnival that at the beginning of each spring « *sembra spargere su Venezia alcune pallide rose della festosa decadenza repubblicana* ».

These first rowing matches were made in heavy fifty-oar *navigli a carena piatta* very unlike the later creation of the lagoons.

As the Venetian longing for elegance and beauty manifested itself more and more luxuriously and with more and more abandon, the forms of these *navigli di corso* outlined on the waterways became as exquisitely graceful as those fine sea shapes of Benvenuto Cellini copied by the Murano glass workers.

There was the *fisolara* a long *barca* very narrow and very light used on the lagoons for the shooting of a peculiar water pigeon called the *fisolo*; the *capariola* specially adapted for shell fishing, (*la pesca delle cape*) and very like the *sandolo* of to-day; the *scoazzera* or garbage boat, blackened with pitch for the greater amusement of the spectators, and serving as clown and handicap; the *cofano* or light fishing skiff; the *gobbo*, (literally hunchback) a very small two-oar *barca*; and finally the *gondola* in all its variations. The racing boats of the *regata* were entered according to form and strength of oar in five different *corsi*:

1. *di battelletti ad un solo remo* ;
2. *di batteletti a due remi* ;
3. *di gondolette ad un remo*, (which had a higher prize);
4. *di gondolette a due remi* ;
5. *di battelli a due remi, vogati da donne*.





This fifth class «rowed by women» had its *mossa*, or starting point, where the grand canal broadens into the Bacino, near the Church of the Salute; while the other *regatanti* «*prendevano le mosse*» far down the lagoon at the *mota di San Antonio*, the *poppe* or poops ranged in line along a rope to which they were attached by cords held firm under the foot of the *regatante* who stood erect at his oar, after the manner of rowing peculiar to Venice, awaiting the «*lassar el spagheto*», (let go the cord) of the signal gun. Starting far down the *Bacino di San Marco* where now are the Public Gardens made on the ruins of *San Antonio Abbate*, and where the Emperor of the departing «Hohenzollern» gave his salute of adieu to their majesties of Italy, this old *regata* swept up the whole course of the Grand Canal to Santa Croce, and back again to the *svolto* or turning of the splendid *corso* at the Palazzo Foscari, where to this day at the time of the biennial *Regata* the *sindaco* and his committee award the prizes to the music of a floating bandstand and the indefinable harmony of Venetian applause; there where once stood the three patricians chosen to bestow the purses

fastened to their respective banners of victory, — red for the first prize, green for the second, blue for the third, and yellow for the fourth. Like the brilliant wings of some strange swift water bird skimming the surface of that unrivalled course, the accompanying barges, those magnificent *bissone* and *margarote*, advanced with the competing boats. On these barges was lavished the passionate love of elegance that distinguished the *Repubblica* in her days of strength, a fearless abandon to the splendour of color as if indeed she were but copying the oriental glory of her skies or the impossible loveliness of her deep-tinged marbles.

The eight-oared *bissone*, curiously so called from *bissa* a serpent because of the brightness of their long slender form, that seemed instinct with some fantastic life like the romantic dragons of Carpaccio, were decked in rich stuffs with fanciful rigging and gold embroidered sails, each according to the voluptuous caprice of its patrician owner.

The *balotine* svelt and elegant with four agile oarsmen preceded the regata commanded by the directors of the spectacle, who kneeling in the prow, threw *balote* (little balls of clay) right and left at any tardy boat on the *corso*.

As for the sumptuous *Feste Teatrali* of the Popes the greatest masters did not disdain scene painting, so for these one-time *gare pubbliche* of the Venetian waterways the Titan fancy of a Tintoretto composed symbolic groups and splendid backgrounds, while Carpaccio is said to have found his finest models in their inspiration.

But among those *regate* of which detailed descriptions have come down to us, the most interesting are quite late in the history of the fated Republic, and all are given for the fêting of some princely guest.

In 1636 it was in honor of the Duke of Brunswick when the *bissone* of a Dolfin, a Mocenigo a Loredan, a Tiepolo, were floating thrones for Venus, Mars, and Diana, while the *trombettieri* and *rematori*, (heralds and oarsmen) were Ethiopians, warriors or nymphs. Among the racing boats were four *battelli* from Fusina, each with two oars, « *vogati da otto donne* ». In addition to the regatanti, there was the « *Machina* » of the serenata, a monster barge representing Proteus, the sea god from whose gigantic head crowned in laurel, there came the voice of a famous singer, while on the god's scaly back Venus rested

surrounded by the Graces and courted by the beautiful women representing the *gentildonne Veneziiane*. Above there were broad steps leading to a sort of *loggia*, whose arches were supported by twenty columns, and whose niches held twenty statues each with a lighted torch. Of this *loggia*, the crowning effect of the spectacle, Alberti the director of all the fêtes arranged in honor of the Duke of Brunswick, has left an account. Here five of the most famous artists of Europe, in the traditional costumes of Germany, France, Spain, Russia and Italy, sang a ballad of *L'amor sincero*, accompanied by the most distinguished *suonatori* romantically dressed in that brilliant silken tissue interwoven with gold and silver that was peculiar to the Republic, while entranced thousands listened from the balconies or followed in the mass of *barche* and gondolas choking the canal, lured on by that spell of pleasure ever so subtle in Venice.

In 1709 there was another very pompous *festa lagunare* in honor of Frederic IV king of Denmark and Norway, where there were twenty-four *peote* besides the *bissone* all most superbly decked by their patrician owners. The *peota*, a softer Venetian spelling for *pedotto*

or *piloto*, meant originally a guide or director, then a great covered barge of eight oars specially adapted for the splendid symbolic fêtes of the Grand Canal. Curiously enough the expression « *far peota* » means to-day among the people, the hiring of one of these *barche* for the late afternoon of some festa or the whole long summer night of the « *Redentore* » to be spent on the canal of the Giudecca or drifting down the Canalazzo, or taking *el largo* across the still lagoon to the Lido, ever yielding to that irresistible *voluptas* of the Venetian oar and the Venetian song:

Sto remeto che ne dondola
Insordirne no se sente
Come i s'ciocchi de le scurie,
Come i urli de la zent. :
 (This oar that swings us on
 makes no sound to deafen us
 like the cracking of the whips
 or the hubbub of the crowd)

Of the regata of 1716 given before the Saxon prince Frederic there is special mention because of its greater luxury and elegance. The symbolic figures of the *peote* imagined and magnificently executed by Venice's great-

est names all with reference to the *motivo* of the spectacle represented: the Queen of the Adriatic seated majestically on a Lion embracing the river Elbe; the Queen of the Sea with Fame crowned by Merit; the triumph of Majesty courted by Merit and Honor. The *machina* from which the prizes for the *regatanti* were distributed was stationed at the famous *svolto* of the Canal between the Palazzi Foscari and Balbi, and represented the Reign of Neptune shining with crystals and adorned with golden statues and silver fountains.

In 1740 in honor of Frederic Augustus III king of Poland and Elector of Saxony, the *peote* of the patricians Giulio Contarini, Pietro Correr, Alvise Mocenigo IV, Giulio Querini, Polo Dona, Angelo Maria Labia, Antonio Molin, Vincenzo Barbon Morosini, Pietro Foscari, Simone Contarini, Giacomo Soranzo and Alvise Mocenigo, (names that were once Venice's most precious jewels, the heirlooms of her past, and the pride of her fallen state), symbolized: Valor crowned, fêted by the Adriatic in the hanging gardens of Flora; Hercules killing the dragon in the garden of the Hesperides, the chariot of Venus drawn by doves, Diana the huntress and Endymion

with his dogs, Saxony crowned by Poland, the Car of Apollo led by two horses and preceded by Aurora, Peace in triumph over Discord, the chariot of Flora driven by Cupid, Mount Parnassus with Apollo and the Muses and the horse Pegasus; Muscovy and Poland united in favor of Frederic Augustus, the liberal arts, Poetry, Music and Painting. The *peota* of the future Doge, Alvise Mocenigo IV changed form three times during the spectacle; first Cibeles led in triumph by Neptune, then Neptune fêting Phoebus; and thirdly the chariot of Night led by Neptune.

The regata of 1764 was made more splendid by the presence of Edward Augustus of Brunswick-Luneburg, Duke of York, and the *Machina* represented a garden in which Venice was embracing England.

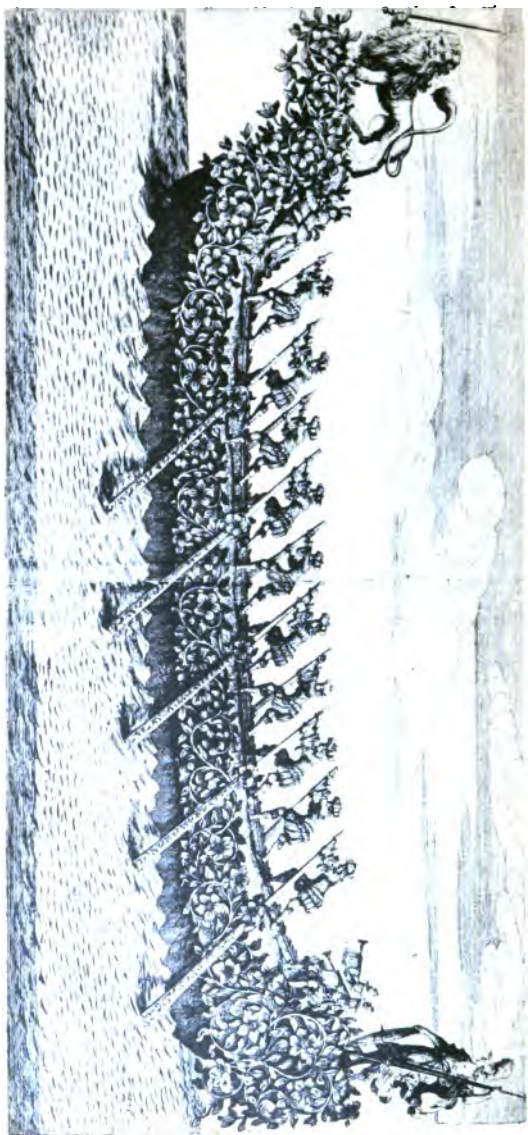
In 1775 there was an extraordinary *regata* for the entertainment of the Emperor Joseph II, in which figured fourteen most magnificent *bissone* of the wealthiest patricians, the Pisani, Giovanelli, Valmarana, Contarini, Pesarò, Mocenigo, Manin, and Michiel, while the foreign colonies and the corporations of the Arts and Trades, fitted out each its own *peota*, and the inimitable Italian masques, ever the

Mimi and mentors of the people, followed in their *barche*.

Most famous of all, because nearest the last step of the Republic, and having left its records in descriptions of pen and pencil was the water festival for the Conti del Nord, the Russian princes, in 1682. The *machina* represented a temple rising from the sea, like Venice herself, while a hundred clear jets of water burst from the rocks at its base and served to keep off the too curious gondolas. For the illustrious guests themselves were reserved two luxuriously appointed *peote* even rivalling those of *Sua Serenissima*, with a transparent covering of heavy crystal, the oarsmen most splendidly dressed in the corresponding colors of their *peota* whose hangings were of blue and pink satin with a careless wealth of ornament in flowers and heavy silver fringes.

Such was Venice in her pleasure, grown reckless under the shadow of her winged Lion of St. Mark, and heedless of his solemn greeting: « Pax tibi Marce Evangelista Meus » ; until, like a pearl, — the Oriental pearl to which her painters have likened her, — loosened from its living shell and ripened into





death, she fell before Napoleon, a beautiful jewel, but only a jewel, forevermore.

All in vain the heroism of 1848, and the historic decree « *Resistenza ad ogni costo* », that answered Manin's call like the last long-drawn breath of a Republic « *dopo secoli di gloria* »; life went out with that splendid effort of passion and sacrifice, the death struggle of the last remaining virtue of this grandest of patrician states! But as among the pale sea-changed marbles of Venice one finds still the warm passion of Oriental color, and as behind the great altar of San Marco the transparent alabasters of Solomon's temple still glow like flame under the quickening touch of the Venetian sun; so today this people of a ghostly Republic, of a triumphant past, responds to the one impulse that has outlined its power, and per *un'ora di gioia*, that Venetian « *gioia* » of *la barca, la musica, l'aria, e il mar*, — becomes once more *il popolino* of the *cinque cento* in « *la sede principalissima del piacere* ».

And so when Venice for a few brief hours at the close of this nineteenth century seemed made again the gate to the Orient, the *mossa* of the most modern of crusades; when

once more the patrician *corso* of the regate pulsed with the swift moving escort of *bis-sone*, and the gothic palaces that had greeted Henri d' Anjou opened their balcone, dim and dreamlike with the fame of great names that are dead, on the entry of the Imperial pilgrims of Germany; it seemed indeed as if the mighty young kaiser of the Hohenzollern, *pellegrino augusto* to the Terra Santa, had chosen this historic starting point in the fervour of the crusader's spirit, « *quasi a sentir il profumo* » redolent still in the air of Venice, of those Levantine treasures, first fruits of the early Crusades, to call back the glories of other sovereigns and captains of the sea, as he girded himself in spirit for this most sovereign affirmation of the Faith, a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre before a world that no longer wants the Tomb but still has need of the Christ!

No Bucintoro, with its magnificent *principe* and crimson robed suite, golden emblem of the most triumphant of maritime powers, went out from Venice to meet the northern Emperor: the iron rails of the long Mestre bridge bind Venice to the terra ferma; and instead of Tintoretto's travesty, an eager re-

porter had hidden himself overnight in a workmen's loft that he might see the Imperial train arrive.

Yet once outside the station, the doors were closed on modern Europe. The quaint-liveried gondolas of their majesties of Italy lay on the waters of the Grand Canal awaiting the sovereigns and the helmeted suite of Germany; around them the fantastic splendor of the municipal escort of historic *bis-sone* with rigging and oarsmen symbolic of long lost dominions; the dreamy green-sailed galley of Columbus, the purple Neptune with white plumed crew, the gold and crimson of San Marco, and the orange and red of the Egyptians. All along the highway of proud palaces whose varied stories seem stamped each in its own marble symbols written by the hand of the all powerful Republic, the fresh october air from the Adriatic just lifted the entwined flags of Germany and Italy, and only from the gondolas of the Municipio and the historic *bis-sone* fluttered the once dominant Lion of San Marco.

Yet as the course finished at the Palazzo Reale, just in sight of the great white yacht that lay like a crusader's galley off the mar-

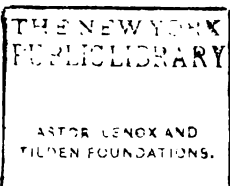
ble *riva degli Schiavoni*, over the luminous colors of the Bacino, the barges and gondolas and the *gala* of royal liveries and the shimmering of wet oars raised in salute, the rose-tinted front of the Ducal palace seemed to rise fresh from the lagoon with its long sea gallery looking toward the Orient as if once more to bear the balance of two Empires, once more the bond between *Turchi e Tedeschi*.

Quando del mar gran donna,
 Cinta d'opîmi allori
 Del barbaro Ottoman mietuti a scorno,
 Tuoi splendidi tesori
 Agli ospitali re schieravi intorno,
 E nella mostra altera
 De' vanti tuoi, non ultimo quest'era.





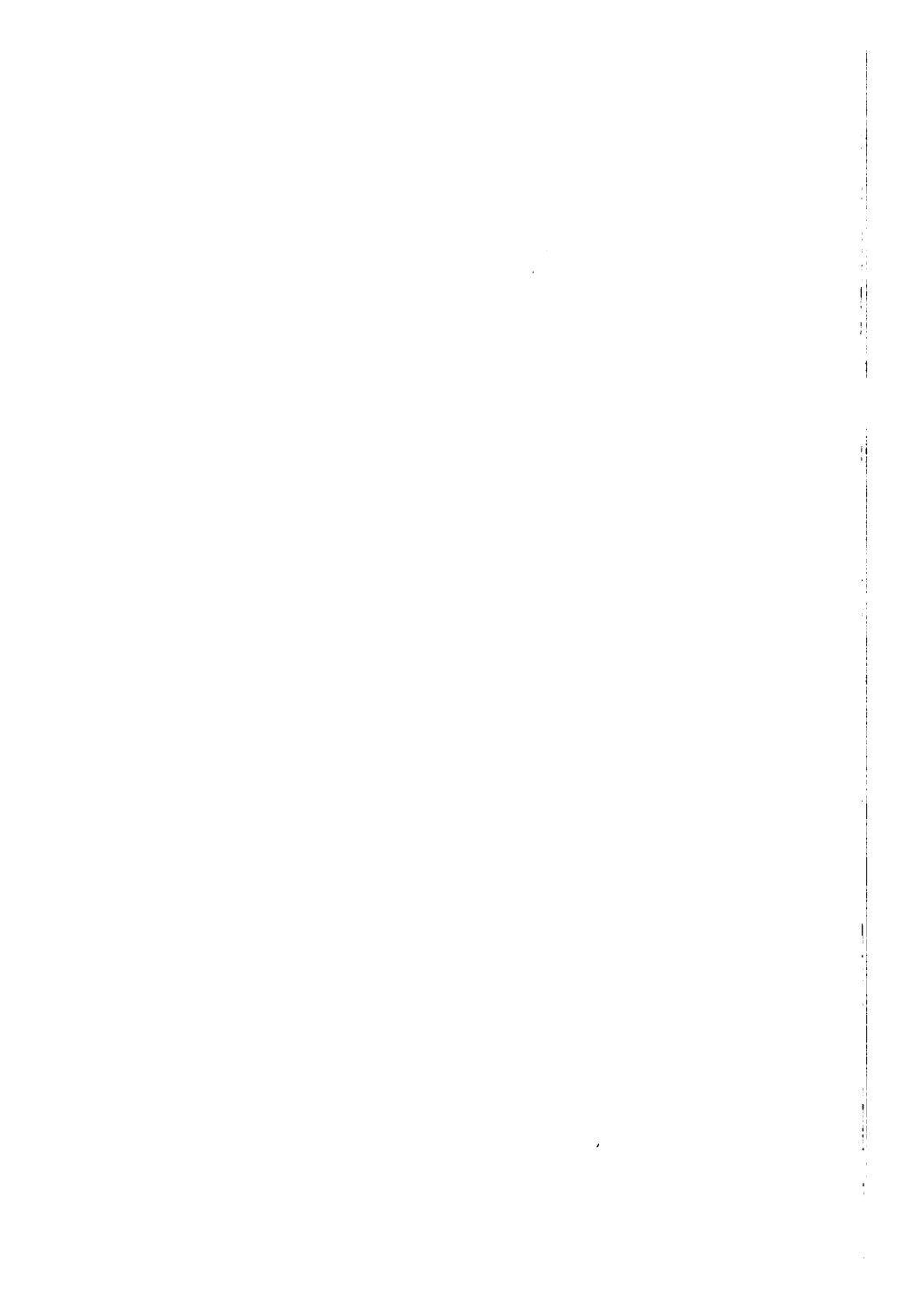
*Questa è d'ogni altro ben vido Secondo
Vinetia. Et tal che chi lei vede stima
Veder raccolto in breue spazio il mondo.*





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